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A Study to Compare the Scholastic Attendance and the Scholastic Achievement of First Grade Students Whose Parents Participated in the Adult Basic Education Program with the Scholastic Attendance and the Scholastic Achievement of First Grade Students Whose Parents Did Not Participate in the Adult Basic Education Program.

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First grade students from families with common ethnic, social, and economic characteristics were studied to determine the effects of parent participation in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program on the attendance and achievement of the children. The experimental group was composed of 160 children from low income, Spanish-speaking families in which at least one parent had participated in the ABE program conducted by the Brownsville Consolidated Independent School District. A control group of 160 children was selected from families in which neither parent had participated in the ABE program. Findings of the study were that the attendance rate of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group during the 1967-68 school year, and the experimental group attained a higher average score on a standard achievement test than did the control group. Results of a limited supplementary investigation indicated that the ABE program may have a beneficial effect on job performance and social, civic, and economic activities of participants. (JH)

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A STUDY TO COMPARE THE SCHOLASTIC ATTENDANCE AND THE SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH THE SCHOLASTIC ATTENDANCE AND THE SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

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A STUDY TO COMPARE THE SCHOLASTIC ATTENDANCE AND THE SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH THE SCHOLASTIC ATTENDANCE AND THE SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Texas Education Agency
January 1969

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INTRODUCTION

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program is designed to teach functionally illiterate adults to read, write, and speak the English language. The program is structured to develop basic arithmetic skills as well as essential language skills. The curriculum employed in the teaching of these basic skills emphasizes occupational proficiency, community understanding, civic responsibility, and home and family relationships.

The program is commonly believed to affect the lives of the participants in many ways. Informal studies have shown that the newly acquired knowledge of the English language helps adult basic education participants obtain better jobs, earn more money, and obtain a greater social satisfaction both on and off the job. Little is known, however, about the effects of adult participation in the adult basic education program on the lives of the children of the participants. For example, do the children of the adult participants attend school more regularly than children of parents who did not participate in adult basic education? Do these children obtain higher scores on achievement tests? This study is focused on these two questions and compares the scholastic attendance and the scholastic achievement of first grade students whose parents participated in the adult basic education program with the scholastic attendance and scholastic achievement of first grade students whose parents did not participate in the adult basic education program.

PROCEDURES

During the 1967-68 school year, a total of 2,129 children were enrolled in the first grade at 14 Brownsville, Texas elementary schools. A survey revealed that 160 of these children were from low income, Spanish-speaking families in which at least one parent had participated in the adult basic education program conducted by the Brownsville Consolidated Independent School District.[1] These 160 children were selected as the experimental group. A second group of 160 first grade students from low income Spanish-speaking families in which neither parent had participated in the adult basic education program was selected to serve as the control group. The distribution among the 14 elementary schools of the 2,129 first grade students and the 320 students selected for the study is shown in Table I.

Scholastic Attendance

The attendance records of the members of the experimental group at each school were reviewed and the number of days each student was present during the school year was recorded. The individual totals were then combined to show the total number of days attendance for the experimental group at each school and the total number of days attendance for the entire experimental group of 160 students. An attendance rate was calculated by dividing the number of days the members of the experimental group attended school by the number of attendance days in the school year.[2] The attendance rate of the experimental group at each school and the attendance rate of the experimental group as a whole are shown in Table II.

Identical procedures were employed to calculate the attendance rate for the control group at each school and the control group as a whole. (See Table III.)

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[1]A "low income, Spanish-speaking family", as defined in this study, is a family in which Spanish is the predominant language spoken and the total family income is $3,000.00 or less per year.

[2]There were 173 attendance days in the 1967-68 school year. The divisor used in these calculations was obtained by multiplying the number of students in each group by 173.

TABLE I

FIRST GRADE ENROLLMENT AND NUMBER OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS AT 14 BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, 1967-68

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	FIRST GRADE ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	NUMBER OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN CONTROL GROUP
Putegnat	151	11	11
Canales	235	22	22
Clearwater	89	3	3
Cromack	300	25	25
Ebony Heights	210	6	6
El Jardin	162	12	12
Garden Park	60	5	5
Longoria	133	12	12
Resaca	84	4	4
Russell	143	10	10
Sharp	85	5	5
Skinner	133	16	16
Victoria Heights	210	16	16
Webb	134	13	13
TOTALS	2,129	160	160

TABLE II

ATTENDANCE RATE OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, 1967-68 SCHOOL YEAR

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	NUMBER OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	NUMBER OF ATTENDANCE DAYS, 1967-68 SCHOOL YEAR[3]	NUMBER OF DAYS ATTENDED BY EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	ATTENDANCE RATE[4]
Putegnat	11	1,903.0	1,781.5	93.62%
Canales	22	3,806.0	3,580.0	94.06%
Clearwater	3	519.0	469.5	90.46%
Cromack	25	4,325.0	4,038.5	93.38%
Ebony Heights	6	1,038.0	981.0	94.51%
El Jardin	12	2,076.0	1,999.5	96.32%
Garden Park	5	865.0	830.5	96.01%
Longoria	12	2,076.0	1,970.0	94.89%
Resaca	4	692.0	654.0	94.51%
Russell	10	1,730.0	1,659.0	95.90%
Sharp	5	865.0	735.0	84.97%
Skinner	16	2,768.0	2,534.0	91.55%
Victoria Heights	16	2,768.0	2,516.5	90.91%
Webb	13	2,249.0	2,102.5	93.49%
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP TOTAL	160	27,680.0	25,851.5	93.39%

[3]Number of students in experimental group multiplied by 173 (See also Footnote 2, Page 2).

[4]Example: (Putegnat) 1781.5 ÷ 1903.0 X 100 = 93.62%.

TABLE III

ATTENDANCE RATE OF FIRST GRADE

STUDENTS IN CONTROL GROUP,

1967-68 SCHOOL YEAR

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	NUMBER OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN CONTROL GROUP	NUMBER OF ATTENDANCE DAYS, 1967-68 SCHOOL YEAR[5]	NUMBER OF DAYS ATTENDED BY CONTROL GROUP	ATTENDANCE RATE[6]
Putegnat	11	1,903.0	1,766.0	92.80%
Canales	22	3,806.0	3,537.0	92.93%
Clearwater	3	519.0	431.0	83.04%
Cromack	25	4,325.0	4,068.0	94.06%
Ebony Heights	6	1,038.0	974.5	93.88%
El Jardin	12	2,076.0	1,884.0	90.75%
Garden Park	5	865.0	786.5	90.92%
Longoria	12	2,076.0	1,867.0	89.93%
Resaca	4	692.0	657.5	95.01%
Russell	10	1,730.0	1,664.0	96.18%
Sharp	5	865.0	742.0	85.78%
Skinner	16	2,768.0	2,614.0	94.44%
Victoria Heights	16	2,768.0	2,492.0	90.03%
Webb	13	2,249.0	2,113.0	93.95%
CONTROL GROUP TOTAL	160	27,680.0	25,596.5	92.47%

[5]Number of students in control group multiplied by 173 (See also Footnote 2, Page 2).

[6]Example: (Putegnat) 1766.0 ÷ 1903.0 X 100 = 92.80%.

Table IV presents a comparison of the attendance rate of the experimental group and the attendance rate of the control group and shows that the attendance rate of the experimental group was higher at 8 of the 14 schools in the study. This Table also shows that the attendance rate (93.39%) of the entire experimental group was higher than the attendance rate (92.47%) of the entire control group.

Scholastic Achievement

The scholastic achievement of the students in the experimental group and the control group was measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, Primary I Battery, Form W, which was administered to both groups in April 1968. At each school, a mean composite test score for the experimental group and a mean composite test score for the control group were calculated.

As shown in Table V, the mean composite test score of the experimental group was higher than the mean composite test score of the control group at 12 of the 14 schools in the study and the mean score of the entire experimental group (1.52) was higher than the mean score of the entire control group.

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF THE ATTENDANCE RATE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP 1967-68 SCHOOL YEAR

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	ATTENDANCE RATE, EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	ATTENDANCE RATE, CONTROL GROUP
Putegnat	93.62%	92.80%
Canales	94.06%	92.93%
Clearwater	90.46%	83.04%
Cromack	93.38%	94.06%
Ebony Heights	94.51%	93.88%
El Jardin	96.32%	90.75%
Garden Park	96.01%	90.92%
Longoria	94.89%	89.93%
Resaca	94.51%	95.01%
Russell	95.90%	96.18%
Sharp	84.97%	85.78%
Skinner	91.55%	94.44%
Victoria Heights	90.91%	90.03%
Webb	93.49%	93.95%
All Schools	93.39%	92.47%

TABLE V

MEAN COMPOSITE TEST SCORES

STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST

PRIMARY I BATTERY, FORM W

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MEAN COMPOSITE TEST SCORE, EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	MEAN COMPOSITE TEST SCORE, CONTROL GROUP
Putegnat	1.44	1.36
Canales	1.45	1.47
Clearwater	1.41	1.29
Cromack	1.45	1.45
Ebony Heights	1.90	1.60
El Jardin	1.68	1.50
Garden Park	1.57	1.51
Longoria	1.43	1.40
Resaca	1.61	1.56
Russell	1.83	1.72
Sharp	1.62	1.44
Skinner	1.47	1.30
Victoria Heights	1.45	1.32
Webb	1.40	1.37
All Schools	1.52	1.44

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was initiated to compare the scholastic attendance and the scholastic achievement of first grade students whose parents participated in the adult basic education program with the scholastic attendance and scholastic achievement of first grade students whose parents did not participate in the adult basic education program.

The subjects for the study were 320 first grade students from families with common ethnic, social, and economic characteristics. One hundred and sixty of the students (the experimental group) were selected because one or more of their parents had participated in the adult basic education program for one year. The remaining 160 students (the control group) were selected because neither of their parents had participated in the adult basic education program.

Attendance records of the experimental group and the control group for the 1967-68 school year were reviewed and compared. A standard achievement test was administered to both groups.

The results of the study show (1) the attendance rate of the experimental group was higher than the attendance rate of the control group during the 1967-68 school year and (2) the experimental group attained a higher average score on a standard achievement test than the control group.

These findings therefore suggest that the adult basic education program may have a measurable effect on the scholastic attendance and scholastic achievement of the first grade children of the participants.

Future studies of greater scope and depth than was possible in this limited study may lead to the formulation of more positive generalizations concerning these relationships.

ADDENDUM

As the study described in the preceding pages progressed, the project staff initiated a limited supplementary investigation which produced some interesting side lights on the effects of the ABE program on the social, civic, and economic activities of the participants.

Sixty randomly selected ABE participants were interviewed in their homes by members of the project staff. Each participant was asked to respond to a series of 17 questions concerning some possible effects of the ABE program on their attitudes and activities. The questions and the responses of the participants are displayed in Table VI.

The responses appear to demonstrate that the ABE program may have a beneficial effect on the social, civic, and economic activities of the participants.

The project staff also interviewed 24 employers in the Brownsville community and elicited their comments concerning some of the apparent effects of the ABE program on the job performance of employees who participated in the program.

The responses of the employers to three selected questions are shown in Table VII. The responses indicate that the ABE program may have a favorable effect of the job performance of the participants.

TABLE VI

RESPONSES OF ABE PARTICIPANTS TO

QUESTIONS CONCERNING SOCIAL, CIVIC,

AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

QUESTION	RESPONSE						
	YES	NO	A GREAT DEAL	SOMEWHAT	LITTLE OR NONE	WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE	NOT APPLICABLE
Have you improved in the use of oral language and has your vocabulary increased?			41	16	2	1	
Do you speak more English at home and at work?			35	19	6		
Are you better able to help your children with school work, since attending ABE?			20	13	5		22
Are you satisfied with curriculum offered by the ABE program?			53	5	1	1	
Do you plan to attend classes in the fall?	57	1					2
Has the ABE program helped you in your home planning; such as, budgeting, balance meals, etc.?			29	25	2		4
Has ABE helped in family recreational activity?			25	27	5		3
Has ABE helped to better inform you of health services offered in our community?			29	27	4		

TABLE VI (Continued)

QUESTION	RESPONSE						
	YES	NO	A GREAT DEAL	SOMEWHAT	LITTLE OR NONE	WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE	NOT APPLICABLE
Did ABE help you make a contribution toward the betterment of your community or neighborhood?			31	25	4		
Is your family pleased because you are attending ABE?			55	5			
Have you received an increase in wages as a result of ABE training in your present employment?	19	21					20
Have you changed jobs to your advantage as a result of ABE?	7	30					23
Do you have a social security number?	49	11					
Can you handle additional responsibilities in your job as a result of ABE?			24	12	6		18
Are you a registered voter and do you exercise the right to vote?	24						36
As a result of ABE, are you active in civic affairs?			27	18	14	1	
As a result of ABE, do you now take an interest in your local, state, and national government affairs?			36	19	5		

TABLE VII

RESPONSES OF 24 EMPLOYERS TO

QUESTIONS CONCERNING JOB PERFORMANCE

OF ABE PARTICIPANTS

QUESTION	RESPONSE			
	YES	A GREAT DEAL	SOMEWHAT	LITTLE OR NONE
Has the ABE program helped the person employed in your business to be a better employee?	15	8		1
As a result of the ABE program, is the employee worth more to you in terms of wages?	16	6	1	1
In your opinion, should the ABE program be followed by additional training in vocational skill areas?	24			